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MARCH 2006

ANTARCTIC PRESS

7272 WURZBACH SUITE 204 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78240 (210) 614-0396

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL®

EDITED BY DOUG DLIN & CHRIS AGUILAR

STORY BY ROBBY BEVARD
ART BY BEN DUNN
TONING BY ROBBY BEVARD
LETTERING BY DOUG DLIN

RICKY FEEPLE: Son of one of the best ninjas alive, Ricky is a highly capable ninja in his own right. This hasn't saved him from forced interdimensional travel, girlfriend problems, or extra homework, though.

KURO: Kuro is the youngest of a family of fifteen kids, all highly successful in martial arts and/or their chosen fields. Now he's training under Anna Feeple. No pressure.

SUZUME: Suzume's ninja specialties are still a secret, but she's definitely good at sizing up an enemy's skills and attack patterns. She hasn't figured out how to get along with Ricky yet, though.

MEPPY: Meppy is a catgirl who teaches gym, is kind of mean, and is apparently a fully qualified ninja instructor. Her fashion sense is keen, too–you know...for a cat.

IN PREVIOUS ISSUES:

A ninja clan known as the Shidoshi are returning after a long absence, and they threaten the existence of all other ninjas. With the ninja vampire Kyonshi on their side, they're especially dangerous. In an attempt to protect the new generation, both Lendo Rivalsan and Anna Feeple have begun training the younger ninjas to survive against the Shidoshi. For Lendo, this means teaming up his younger brother Tetsuo with two female ninjas and honing their stealth by having them play "Don't Wake the Baby." For Anna, it means testing her son Ricky and two other potential students against Meppy, giving them an hour to take a bell from her. Suzume passes the test for the team, though Ricky isn't happy with her methods. His mood isn't improved when he finds all three of them will have to share a room as part of their training!

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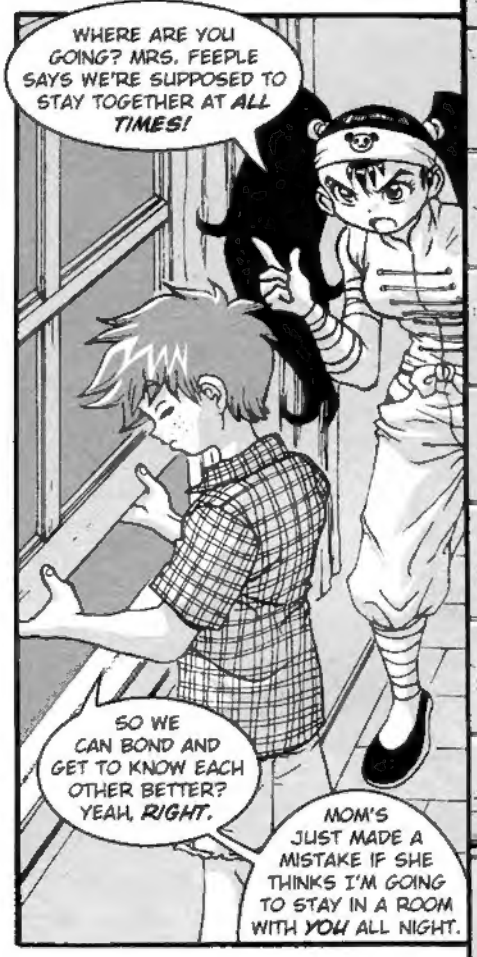
NIGHT OF THE NINJAS!
ART
BEN DUNN
STORY AND TONES
ROBBY BEVARD
LETTERING & EDITS
DOUG DLIN

THIS IS *STUPID.* I'M LEAVING.

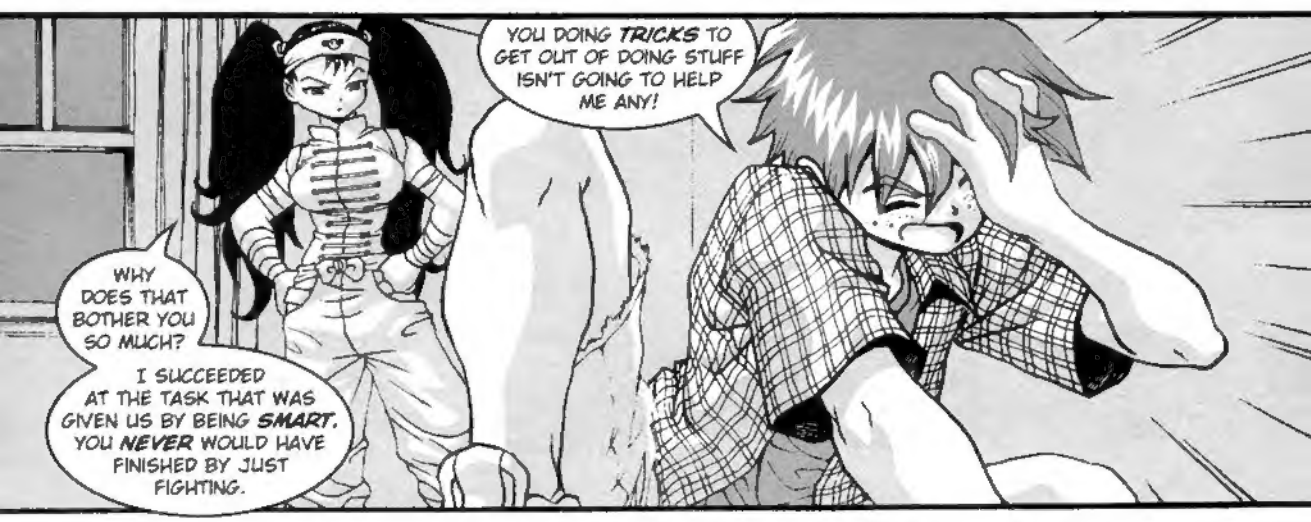

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? MRS. FEEPLE SAYS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO STAY TOGETHER AT *ALL TIMES!*
SO WE CAN BOND AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER? YEAH, *RIGHT.*
MOM'S JUST MADE A MISTAKE IF SHE THINKS I'M GOING TO STAY IN A ROOM WITH *YOU* ALL NIGHT.

I'M GOING TO *MY* ROOM, LOCKED DOOR OR NO. I'M NOT STAYING HERE.

GRAB!

YOU ARE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

THUD!
TOSS...
WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM? WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BOND, AND WE ARE GOING TO BOND!


YOU DOING TRICKS TO GET OUT OF DOING STUFF ISN'T GOING TO HELP ME ANY!
WHY DOES THAT BOTHER YOU SO MUCH?
I SUCCEEDED AT THE TASK THAT WAS GIVEN US BY BEING SMART. YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE FINISHED BY JUST FIGHTING.

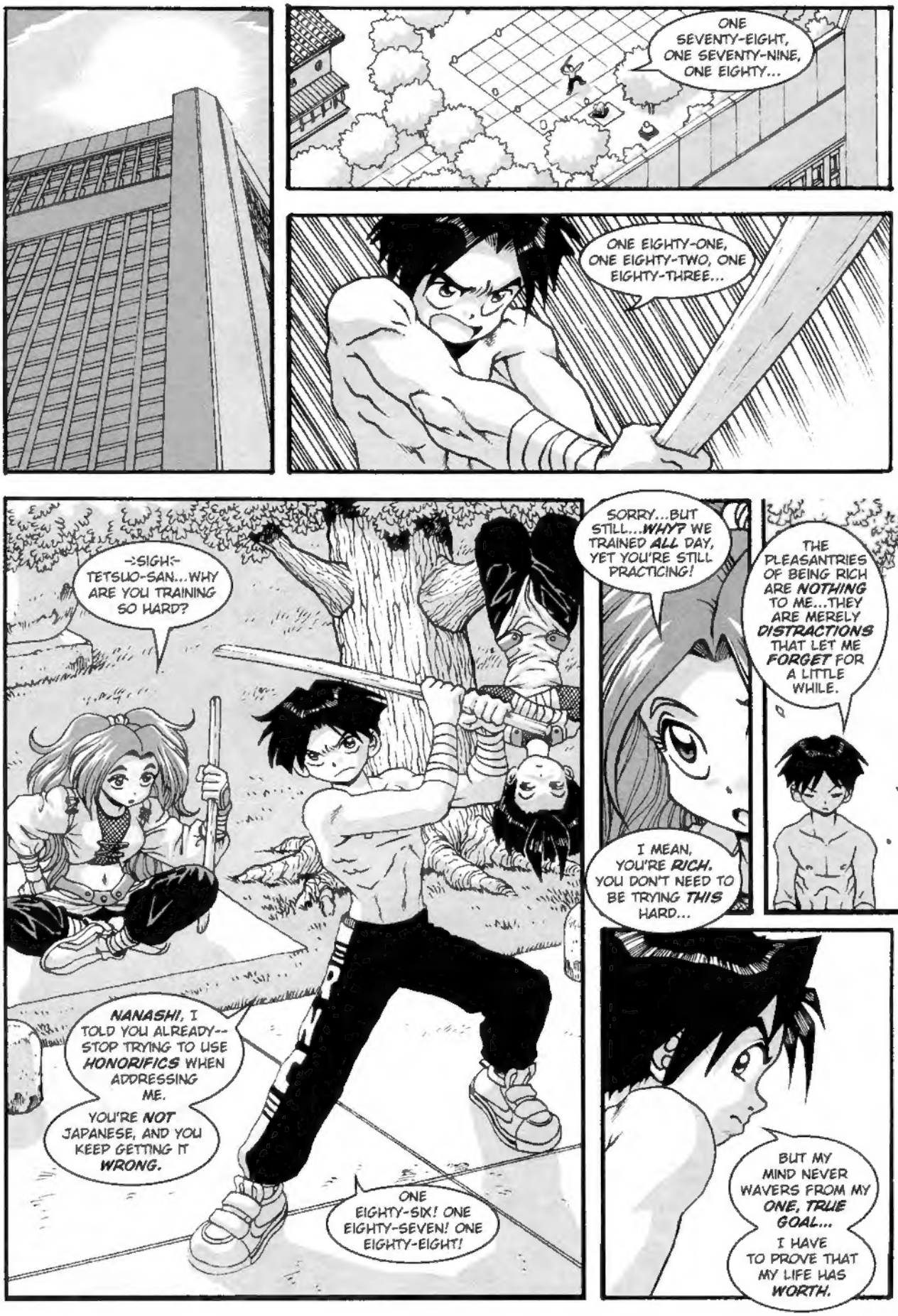
YES, I WOULD HAVE! I'M GOOD!
SHEER SKILL ISN'T ENOUGH.
YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO JUDGE A SITUATION AND KEEP A COOL HEAD AT ALL TIMES.
OBVIOUSLY, QUALITIES YOU LACK.

TAKE THAT BACK.

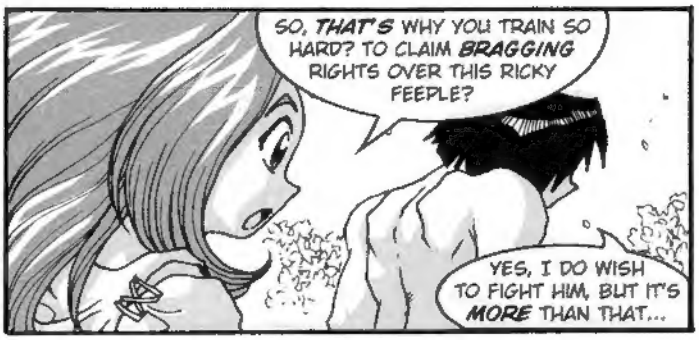
MAKE ME.

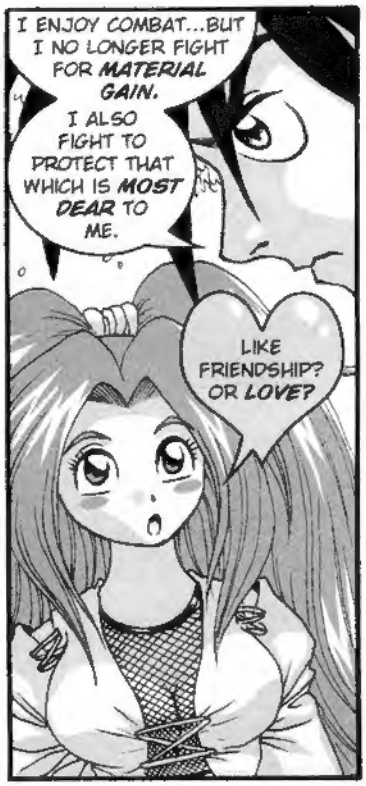
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO GIVE UP BEFORE YOU GET HURT!

YOU DO NOT HAVE THE SKILLS!

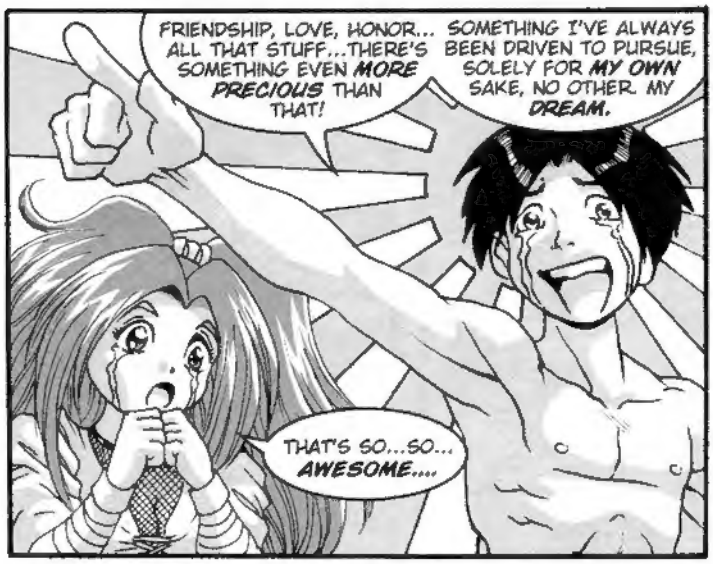

ONE SEVENTY-EIGHT, ONE SEVENTY-NINE, ONE EIGHTY...
ONE EIGHTY-ONE, ONE EIGHTY-TWO, ONE EIGHTY-THREE...
-:SIGH:- TETSUO-SAN...WHY ARE YOU TRAINING SO HARD?
NANASHI, I TOLD YOU ALREADY-- STOP TRYING TO USE HONORIFICS WHEN ADDRESSING ME.
YOU'RE NOT JAPANESE, AND YOU KEEP GETTING IT WRONG.
ONE EIGHTY-SIX! ONE EIGHTY-SEVEN! ONE EIGHTY-EIGHT!
SORRY...BUT STILL...WHY? WE TRAINED ALL DAY, YET YOU'RE STILL PRACTICING!
I MEAN, YOU'RE RICH. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE TRYING THIS HARD...
THE PLEASANTRIES OF BEING RICH ARE NOTHING TO ME...THEY ARE MERELY DISTRACTIONS THAT LET ME FORGET FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
BUT MY MIND NEVER WAVERS FROM MY ONE, TRUE GOAL...
I HAVE TO PROVE THAT MY LIFE HAS WORTH.

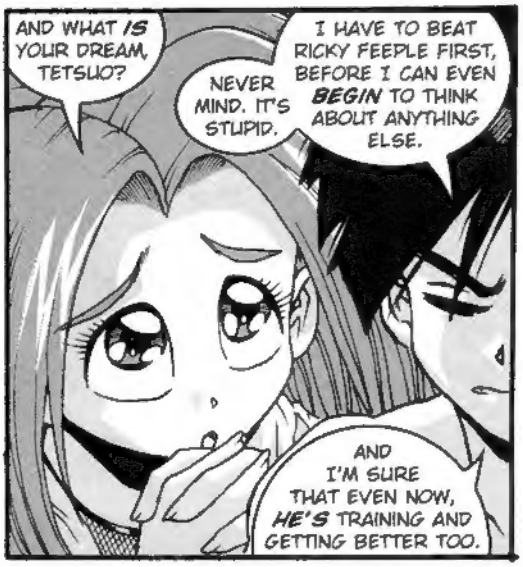
IT IS DEFEATING RICKY FEEPLE THAT WILL SOOTHE MY SOUL, NOT DISTRACTION!


SO, THAT'S WHY YOU TRAIN SO HARD? TO CLAIM BRAGGING RIGHTS OVER THIS RICKY FEEPLE?
YES, I DO WISH TO FIGHT HIM, BUT IT'S MORE THAN THAT...

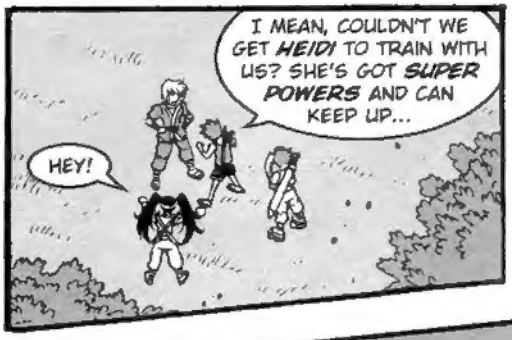

I ENJOY COMBAT...BUT I NO LONGER FIGHT FOR MATERIAL GAIN.
I ALSO FIGHT TO PROTECT THAT WHICH IS MOST DEAR TO ME.
LIKE FRIENDSHIP? OR LOVE?

HONOR... I FOUGHT FOR MY CLAN'S HONOR...
AND YET I ALWAYS LOST AND WAS WORTHLESS IN THEIR EYES.


FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, HONOR... ALL THAT STUFF...THERE'S SOMETHING EVEN MORE PRECIOUS THAN THAT!
SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DRIVEN TO PURSUE, SOLELY FOR MY OWN SAKE, NO OTHER. MY DREAM.
THAT'S SO...SO... AWESOME....


AND WHAT IS YOUR DREAM, TETSUO?
NEVER MIND. IT'S STUPID.
I HAVE TO BEAT RICKY FEEPLE FIRST, BEFORE I CAN EVEN BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.
AND I'M SURE THAT EVEN NOW, HE'S TRAINING AND GETTING BETTER TOO.

JEI...GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER A LITTLE BETTER LAST NIGHT?
-:YAWN:- WE FOUGHT SOME MORE AND DIDN'T GET ANY SLEEP, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN...
JEI--WELL, I'M EXCITED! I'M GOING TO RECEIVE TRAINING FROM THE ANNA FEEPLE! OF COURSE, SHE'S YOUR MOM, SO YOU GOTTA KNOW WHAT SHE'S CAPABLE OF!
ACTUALLY, I DON'T... I'VE NEVER REALLY SEEN HER IN ACTION.
MOM'S NEVER MADE A BIG DEAL ABOUT THE NINJA STUFF BEFORE.
HOW UNOBSERVANT ARE YOU?
-:AHEM:- GOOD MORNING, STUDENTS!
BOW...
JEI--OHAYO, SENSEI!
KURO, ARE YOU WEARING WEIGHTED CLOTHING AGAIN?
JEI-- HAI, SENSEI! IT BUILDS BODY STRENGTH!
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO STOP WEARING IT. IT'S DETRIMENTAL TO YOUR TRAINING.
JEI--?
WHILE IT'S TRUE WEIGHTED CLOTHES CAN ADD MUSCLE, THEY ALSO SLOW YOU DOWN, RESTRICT MOVEMENT, AND WASTE ENERGY.
ALSO, ON THE OCCASIONS WHERE YOU AREN'T WEIGHED DOWN, YOUR BODY WON'T BE ABLE TO BALANCE THE SHIFT IN SPEED AND AGILITY.
THAT CAN COST DEARLY AT A CRUCIAL MOMENT.
JEI-- BUT IT'S COOL AND DRAMATIC TO HAVE A SUDDEN INCREASE!
BE THAT AS IT MAY, YOUR TRAINING ISN'T GOING TO FOCUS ON STRENGTH, BUT AGILITY.



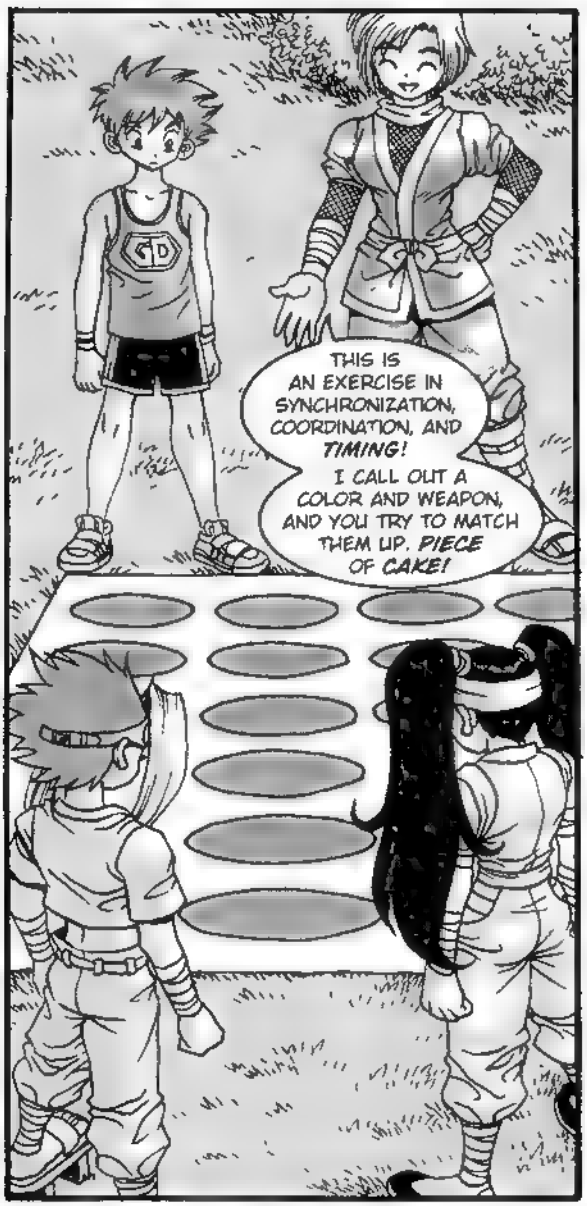
RICKY...TOMORROW GIRL IS OFF IN SPACE ALONG WITH MOST OF THE OTHER SUPERHEROES FIGHTING IN THE MULTIPLE HOUSE CRISES OF INFINITY WAR ON PLANET M!

THERE'S NO TELLING WHEN SHE'LL BE BACK, BUT YOU SHOULD TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT YOUR GIRL-FRIEND IS FIGHTING FOR THE SAFETY AND FREEDOM OF ALL WHO LIVE!

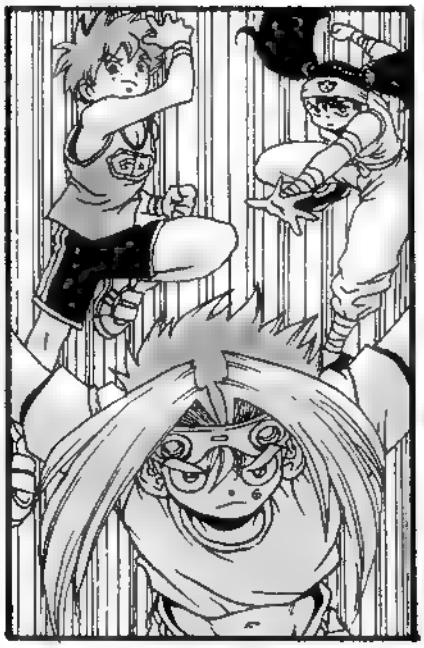
JEI--SUGOI!

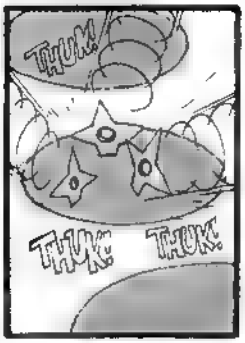
I GUESS THAT'S WHY SHE HASN'T STOPPED BY SINCE I GOT BACK...

RICKY, UNDERSTAND THAT I CHOSE BOTH SUZUME AND KURO TO BE ON THIS TEAM FOR SPECIFIC REASONS. THEY HAVE STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND GOALS THAT I THINK WILL MATCH YOU WELL.
JUST SPEND SOME TIME TOGETHER, AND I'M SURE YOU THREE WILL BALANCE OUT ONE ANOTHER SPLENDIDLY.
NOW THEN...OBVIOUSLY, THE VERY FIRST THING WE NEED WORK ON IS TEAMWORK DRILLS! RICKY AND SUZUME, YOU'RE UP FIRST!
HUH?!
KUK!
BEGIN!
WAK! WAK! WAK! WAK!
WAIT! SWING BACK! EEK! NOT THE GROIN! SORR-EE.. IS THAT BLOOD? OOP!
RIGHT! NO LEFT!
DODGE! OH, THAT HURT! UP! UP! NO! LEFT AGAIN!
OW!
TIME!
WHY DO I HAVE TO BE THE PIÑATA?
THE GOAL HERE IS TO LEARN TO TRUST YOUR TEAMMATE, BECAUSE THEY WILL BE TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING YOU AVOID THE OPPONENT'S WEAPON.
IN THIS CASE, KURO'S BAT!
GRAPEFRUITS AND KUMQUATS TREMBLE AT MY PASSING!
ALL RIGHT, KURO, YOU'RE UP NEXT.
HEY, NO WORRIES. IT'S ALL ABOUT TRUST, RIGHT?
GO-GOMEN, JEI...


THIS IS AN EXERCISE IN SYNCHRONIZATION, COORDINATION, AND *TIMING*!
I CALL OUT A COLOR AND WEAPON, AND YOU TRY TO MATCH THEM UP. *PIECE* OF *CAKE*!

RIGHT-HAND SHURIKEN ON GREEN!



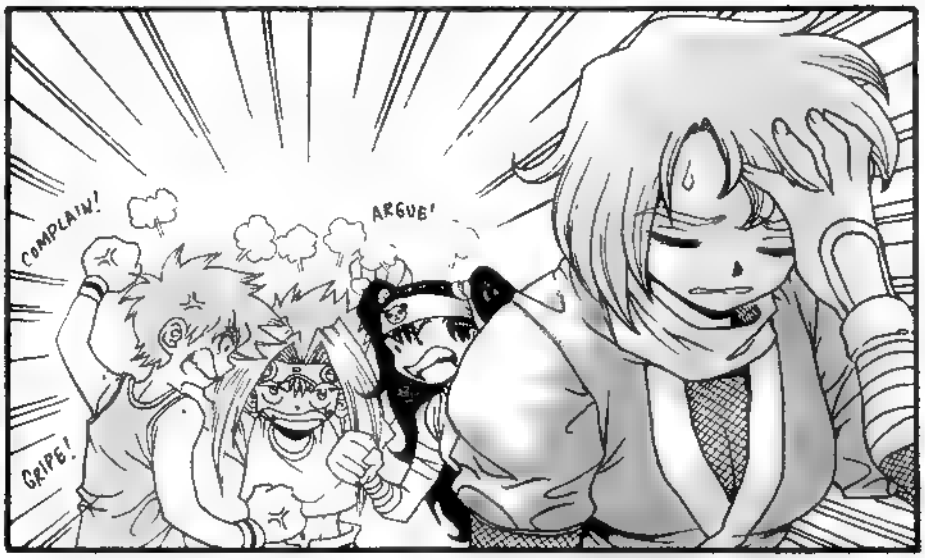

THUM
THUK
THUK

YATAH!

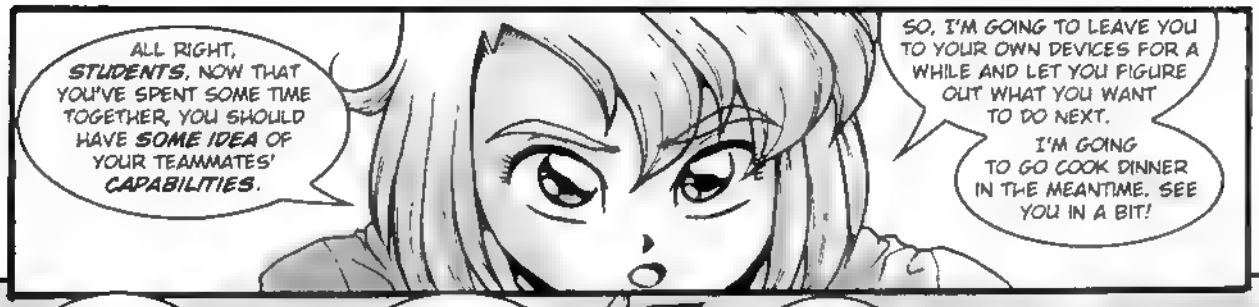
LEFT-HAND KATANA ON BLUE!

TOSS!!

MISS!!

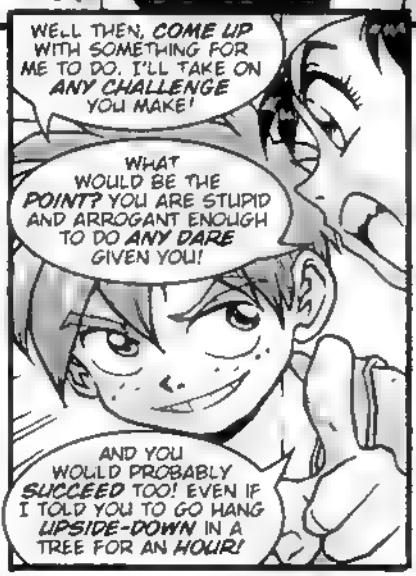

COMPLAIN!
ARGUE!
GRIPE!

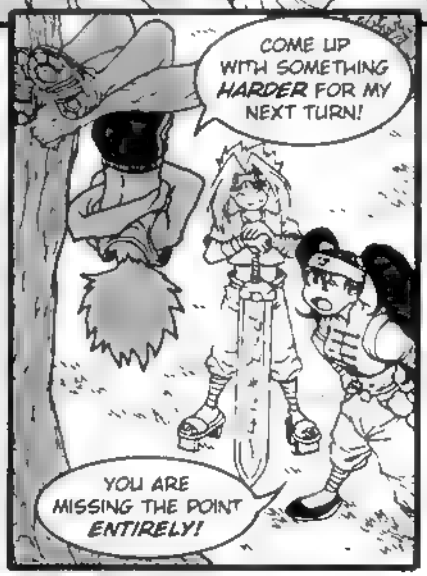
JEI--THIS IS KIND OF AWKWARD, SENSEI. I'M NOT USED TO BEING THIS, AH...CLOSE TO A WOMAN...
WHY'S THAT? I THOUGHT YOU HAD A WHOLE BUNCH OF SISTERS.
JEI--I HAVE TEN BROTHERS AND FOUR SISTERS. WHICH DO YOU THINK I ENDED UP SPENDING MORE TIME SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH?
COME ON, HOW ABOUT WE SWITCH? BOY VERSUS GIRL OR SOMETHING? THIS IS NOT GOING TO GO WELL!
NOTHING GOES WELL AT FIRST! THAT IS WHY WE TRAIN!
J-J-JEI--WAIT!
C'MON, BLOCK!
YOU BLOCK! I AM NOT LEFT-HANDED!
IF WE FAIL, IT WILL BE YOUR FAULT AND NOT MINE. DEAL WITH IT.
BONK
OBVIOUSLY, YOU TWO AREN'T GOING TO LEARN ANYTHING ABOUT TEAMWORK THIS WAY...
IT'S TIME TO TRY SOMETHING ELSE.


ALL RIGHT, STUDENTS, NOW THAT YOU'VE SPENT SOME TIME TOGETHER, YOU SHOULD HAVE SOME IDEA OF YOUR TEAMMATES' CAPABILITIES.
SO, I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU TO YOUR OWN DEVICES FOR A WHILE AND LET YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO NEXT.
I'M GOING TO GO COOK DINNER IN THE MEANTIME. SEE YOU IN A BIT!

JEI-- SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
I DUNNO. WHAT DO YOU WANNA DO?
JEI--I DON'T KNOW, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
I DUNNO, WHAT--

DO NOT START THAT AGAIN!


WELL THEN, COME UP WITH SOMETHING FOR ME TO DO. I'LL TAKE ON ANY CHALLENGE YOU MAKE!
WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT? YOU ARE STUPID AND ARROGANT ENOUGH TO DO ANY DARE GIVEN YOU!
AND YOU WOULD PROBABLY SUCCEED TOO! EVEN IF I TOLD YOU TO GO HANG UPSIDE-DOWN IN A TREE FOR AN HOUR!


COME UP WITH SOMETHING HARDER FOR MY NEXT TURN!
YOU ARE MISSING THE POINT ENTIRELY!

JEI--TRUTH OR DARE...A GAME PLAYED AMONGST ME AND MY SIBLINGS MANY A TIME...
YOU ARE NOT HELPING!

JEI-- I'LL TAKE "TRUTH"! GO AHEAD, ASK ANYTHING. I'M NOT SHY!
WE ARE NOT PLAYING THAT GAME!
JEI--SO MANY MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY ARE FAMOUS NINJAS WITH LEGACIES I CAN NEVER HOPE TO MATCH...
I DID NOT ASK YOU ABOUT THAT...
JEI--YOU PROBABLY WANT TO KNOW WHY I'M TRAINING TO BE A NINJA, DESPITE THAT, RIGHT?
JEI--IT'S BECAUSE OF THE MAN WHO GAVE ME THIS SWORD ..
JEI-- HE'S KNOWN AS THE MILLENNIUM SLAYER, BECAUSE HE'S FOUGHT A THOUSAND EVILS. HE TRAVELS THE WORLD HELPING COUNTLESS PEOPLE, AND...HE'S ALSO MY OLDEST BROTHER, ICHIRO.
JEI-- THE DAY HE LEFT, THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM, I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT HE TOLD ME...
HEI--LITTLE BROTHER, YOU COME FROM A FAMILY WITH A HISTORY FULL OF AMAZING TALENT.
HEI--BUT DON'T LET THAT OVERWHELM YOU. ONE DAY, YOU WILL BE GREAT AS WELL!
HEI-- YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN MY FAVORITE . SO TAKE MY SWORD AND TRAIN.. GROW STRONG...
THUD!

JEI--"...AND WHEN YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH, WE WILL MEET AGAIN!"

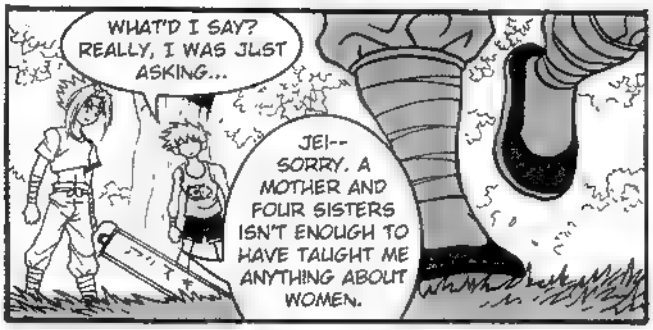
JEI-- AND THEN HE WALKED AWAY, BUT MY SMILE NEVER DIMMED. I'M GONNA BE LIKE HIM, JEI.
I KNOW I'M GONNA BE LIKE HIM.
"AND THE CAT'S IN THE CRADLE AND THE SILVER SPOON..."
JEI--?

HEY, THAT'S PRETTY COOL. AND YOU CAME TO TRAIN WITH MOM TO GET BETTER SO YOU CAN MEET YOUR BROTHER AGAIN?
JEI-- THAT'S RIGHT!

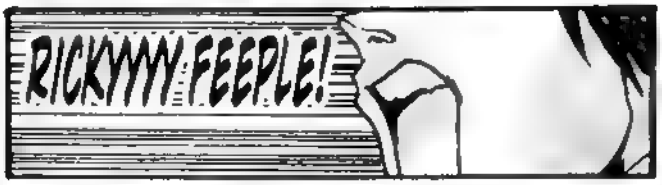
SO, SUZUME, TELL THE TRUTH, WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I NEVER SAID I'D PLAY IN YOUR STUPID GAME!

I DIDN'T AGREE TO DO A DARE, AND I DON'T CARE WHAT KIND OF "TRUTH" YOU HAVE! IT'S OBVIOUS YOU'RE JUST ANGLING FOR A FIGHT!
POINT
ACCUSE!
I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU MY REASONS FOR BEING HERE, OR CARE ABOUT EITHER OF YOU!

I'LL WORK WITH YOU, BUT ONLY BECAUSE ANNA-SENSEI DEMANDS IT OF ME!
UNDERSTAND?


WHAT'D I SAY? REALLY, I WAS JUST ASKING...
JEI-- SORRY. A MOTHER AND FOUR SISTERS ISN'T ENOUGH TO HAVE TAUGHT ME ANYTHING ABOUT WOMEN.

ONE MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND AND SEVENTY-ONE! ONE MILLION, EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND AND SEVENTY-TWO!
TETSUO... HAVE YOU REALLY SWUNG YOUR SWORD THAT MANY TIMES?
NO, NANASHI...IT JUST FEELS LIKE IT...
THE RIVALSAN CLAN HAS ALWAYS BEEN SUPERB NINJAS...
AND YET, FOR EIGHT YEARS--EIGHT YEARS!--I HAVE ALWAYS LOST AGAINST A STUPID AMERICAN KID WHO DOESN'T EVEN TRAIN!
IF I CAN'T BEAT HIM...IF I AM NOT ABLE TO SURPASS EVEN THAT LEVEL, THEN WHAT IS THE POINT?
BUT TETSUO...YOU'RE STRONG... AND YOU HAVE A DREAM...EVEN IF YOU AREN'T WILLING TO SHARE IT YET...
BUT I ALWAYS LOSE TO HIM!
I...I'VE GOTTEN BETTER, I KNOW I HAVE! BUT I HAVEN'T FACED HIM IN A LONG TIME.
HE WAS OFF ON SOME KIND OF SECRET JOURNEY FOR A YEAR! AND HE'S OFFICIALLY TRAINING NOW! HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN BETTER TOO!
SQ
IF THIS RICKY FEEPLE IS SO BIG AND SCARY, WHY NOT JUST TRY HIM AGAIN?
I MEAN, YOU HAVEN'T FOUGHT IN A YEAR. I THINK THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW.
SORA! WHEN DID YOU GET HERE?
YES... I DEFEATED YUMEI...I CAN BEAT HIM TOO...


RICKYYYY FEEPLE!

HUH? WHA' TIME IZZIT?

TETSUO, WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE? IN THE MIDDLE OF THE *NIGHT?* GO HOME, I'M TRYING TO GET SOME *SLEEP.*
YOU THINK YOU'RE *THAT* MUCH BETTER THAN ME, FEEPLE, THAT YOU CAN JUST *DISMISS* ME AT *YOUR* WHIM? WELL, NO *MORE!*

SO YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO LEAVE? EVEN THOUGH YOU *ALWAYS* LOSE?
THAT'S WHAT MY STUPID BIG SISTER SAID BEFORE I GOT HER TO MARRY A *ROBOT!*
YOU'RE *PERSISTENT!* I'LL GIVE YOU THAT!

YOUR OVERCONFIDENCE WILL BE YOUR DOWNFALL!

BRING IT.

FOR A LONG TIME, MY ONLY GOAL WAS SIMPLY TO DEFEAT YOU!
BUT THAT WAS ALWAYS THE END GOAL.
NOW I KNOW YOU'RE JUST A STEP ALONG THE WAY!
I WILL MAKE THE RIVALSAN CLAN EVEN BETTER THAN IT ALREADY IS, SO OUR FAMILY NAME ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES!
KAF
I AM TETSUO RIVALSAN, MAN DESTINED TO BE NINJA KING!
TANG
JUST A STEP, HUH?
NINJA KING?
SSHAH-
-RWNK!
KIK!
JUST BETTER ISN'T ENOUGH ANYMORE!
MY GOAL, MY DREAM, IS TO BE THE VERY BEST! LIKE NO ONE EVER WAS!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT IT IS LIKE, FEEPLE? TO KNOW YOU ARE GREAT?
SELF-ASSURED THAT NOTHING CAN BEAT YOU?
ONLY THEN TO FIND AN OPPONENT SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU...
CLIP!
...THAT THEY DON'T EVEN CONSIDER YOU WORTH THEIR NOTICE?!?
NO WAY... ALL THIS TIME... I'VE BEEN TO TETSUO...
...WHAT KYONSHI IS TO ME? AM I ACTING LIKE TETSUO?
OF COURSE YOU DON'T! HOW COULD YOU!?!
NO!
THAT'S BECAUSE I'M NOT LIKE YOU, TETSUO.

MAN THIS IS EMBARRASSING! JUST LOOK AT HIM!
TETSUO'S JUST WARMING UP! GIVE HIM A CHANCE!
JUST YOU WATCH, HE'S GOING TO TURN IT AROUND!
LEAP!
YEAH, A FULL THREE-SIXTY!
MIND IF I CUT IN?
!
THUK!
WHO'RE YOU?
"MY NAME IS INIGO MONTOYA. YOU KILLED MY FATHER. PREPARE TO DIE."
SAY. WHAT?
SORRY, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THAT! NAME'S SORA. CARE TO DANCE?
JEI-- SHOULDN'T WE JUMP IN AND HELP? WE'RE HIS TEAM-MATES...
HE WANTS TO BE A LONE WOLF, LET HIM FIGHT HIS OWN BATTLES.
WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW THESE PEOPLE.

YOU KNOW, YOU'D BE KINDA CUTE IF YOU WEREN'T BEING SO STUPID.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
I SAW THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE! YOU GOT REALLY TICKED OFF WHEN TETSUO TALKED ABOUT SOMEONE BEING BETTER THAN YOU!
YOU BOYS ARE SO STUPID FOR OBSESSING OVER BEING BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE!
IF ALL YOU WANT IS SUPERIORITY, THEN WHY BOTHER BEING A NINJA?
THERE ARE OTHER STYLES AND METHODS THAT LEAD TO GREATER POWER THAN NINJITSU!
THAT'S... NOT HOW I AM...
SHOULDN'T YOU BE DOING NINJA STUFF JUST FOR THE SHEER JOY OF IT?
I KNOW THAT'S WHAT I GET OUT OF IT!
HE'LL NEVER ADMIT IT, BUT YOU'RE THE GUY THAT TETSUO HAS SET ASIDE SO MUCH RESPECT FOR!
YOU HAVE TO BE BETTER THAN HIS AMBITION.
SPEAKING OF WHOM...

KRAK
YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN, FEEPLE! WHAT'S THE MATTER, DIDN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP?
ONG
YOU DID SHOW UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...
SSKIIID!!
WAK!
TETSUO'S DREAM WILL BE FULLFILLED!
ONCE HE'S PAST YOU, HE CAN SHINE EVEN BRIGHTER THAN HE DOES NOW!
OOF!
THIS IS IT! I'M FINALLY GOING TO BEAT YOU!
PREPARE TO LOSE, FEEPLE!
YEAH, SURE, IN A THREE-ON-ONE...

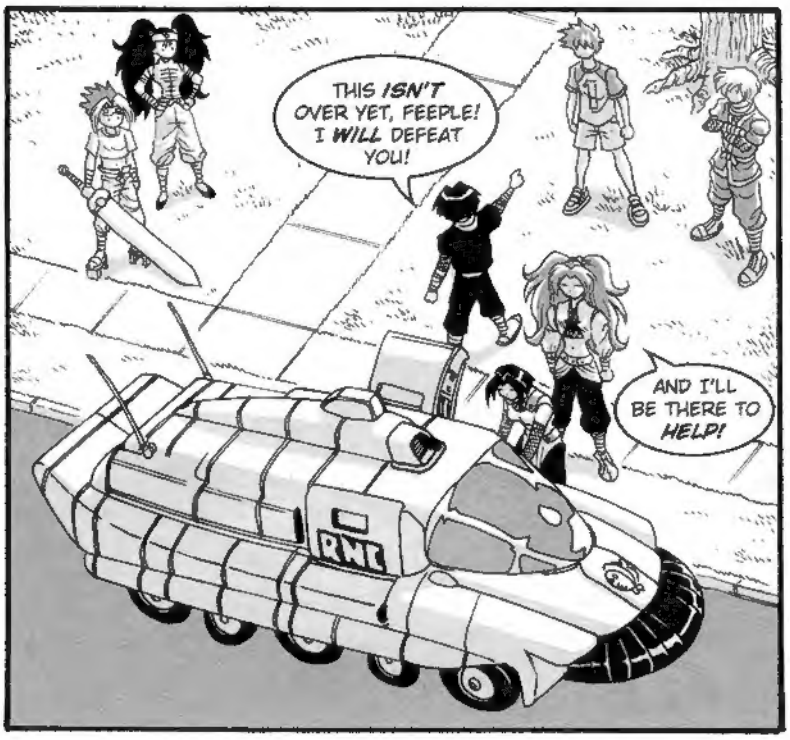
SLASH!
KA-TING!
TING!
TING!
NANI?
JEI-- HI THERE! I'M KURO! AND IN CASE YOU CAN'T READ THE KATAKANA ENGRAVED ON MY SWORD, THIS IS THE "ASS-KICKER!"
JEI--MY SWORD AND I DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO ALL OF YOU GANGING UP ON MY BUDDY THERE!
JUST STAY OUT OF THIS! I HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH YOU TWO! THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND FEEPLE!
WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THUS FAR I HAVE NO REAL REGARD FOR RICKY FEEPLE...
...IF THIS FIGHT AGAINST MY TEAMMATE CONTINUES, I WILL HAVE TO STEP IN AS WELL!
I FEEL IT IS ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU...
...I HAIL FROM THE SATSUJIN ASSASSIN CLAN!
IT IS A LIFESTYLE I AM TRYING VERY HARD TO RELINQUISH, BUT IF PRESSED, I WILL SHOW YOU WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF!

WELL, YOU ARE MAKING ALL THIS RACKET IN MY OWN BACK-YARD, HON...

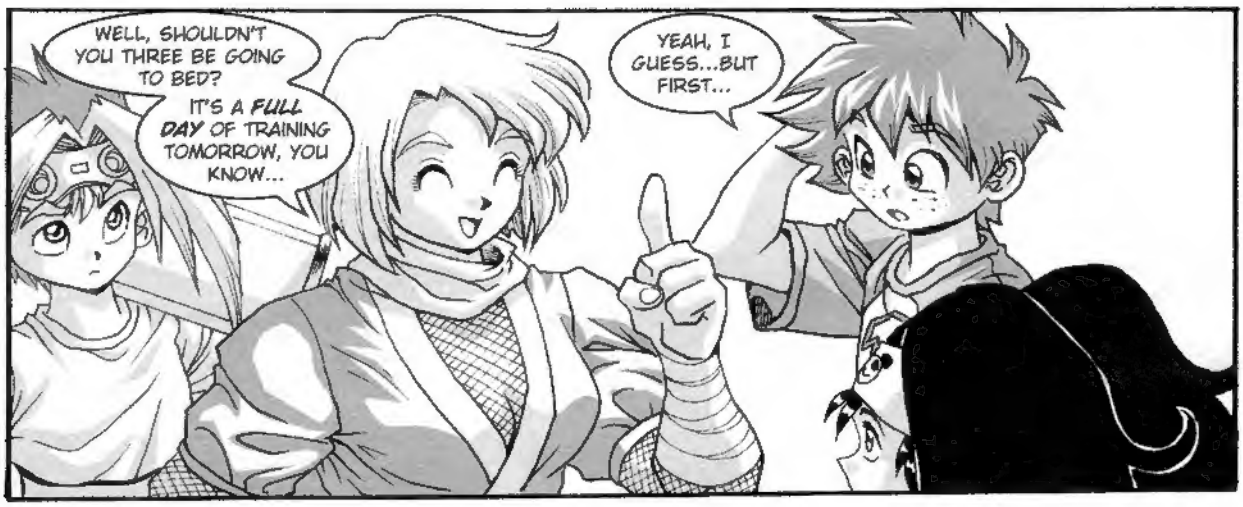
NOW THEN, WHY DON'T YOU HEAD ON HOME BEFORE YOU WAKE UP THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD?

I'LL SCHEDULE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND RICKY TO PLAY LATER.

ER...YES, MA'AM!



*TA-TA FOR NOW!



NEXT TIME:
BAKURETSU BALL!